

NPS Planning & Wilderness Management  
Technical Work Group Meeting,  
December 8, 1999  
Phoenix, AZ

Contact: Linda Jalbert  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
502-638-7909  
Linda\_Jalbert@nps.gov

A. Planning Process Update

Activities:

- Draft Wilderness Management Plan: released for public comment in June 1998
- Colorado River Management Plan: revision process initiated in September 1997
- Fire Management Plan revision underway

Issues:

- Visitor Experience: *What is the appropriate level of human use and desirable range of recreation opportunities in the undeveloped areas?*  
Key words: wilderness experience, group size, length of visit
- Access: *What types of uses and activities are appropriate in the undeveloped areas? Are these uses consistent with wilderness management policy, goals and objectives?*  
Key words: motorized access (river & backcountry), commercial use, allocation of recreational use, administrative use, minimum requirement, minimum tool, roads, permit systems
- Ecosystem Stewardship: *How, and to what extent can the NPS protect or restore the park's natural ecosystems?*  
Key words: ecosystem conservation, partnerships, greater Grand Canyon region, GCDEIS – AMP

## B. Administrative Use in Proposed Wilderness

### Policy Guidance and Framework:

- Wilderness Act
- GCNP Wilderness Recommendation
- NPS *Management Policies*
- Director's Order #41: Wilderness Preservation & Management

### Application of Minimum Requirement Concept:

- Determine if action is necessary or appropriate for the administration of the area as wilderness
  - *Is the activity/action prescribed by current management plans, policies or laws?*  
Key words: fire management, research, river patrols, trails maintenance, resource management
  - *Does the activity/action conflict with stated wilderness goals, objectives, and/or desired future conditions of applicable legislation, policy and/or management plans?*  
Key words: mechanized/motorized access, visitor experience – opportunities for solitude
- Selection of the appropriate management method or tool that causes least impact to the physical resources and visitor experience
  - *What is the least intrusive tool, device, force, equipment, regulation or practice that will achieve the objectives?*  
Key words: mechanized, motorized, structures, enforcement, education
  - *What potential impact does the activity/action have on visitor experience?*  
Key words: noise, amount of time in sight, group size, time of year/season

# **GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

## **Wilderness Act of 1964**

Section 3(c) required the Secretary of Interior to review areas in the National Park System and submit a report regarding suitability for wilderness classification.

Section 4(c) describes the prohibition of certain uses: "...except as necessary to meet the minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purposes of this Act, there shall be no temporary road, no use of motorized vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area."

Section 4(d)(1) describes special provisions: "Within wilderness areas designated by this Act the use of aircraft or motorboats, where these uses have already become established, may be permitted to continue subject to such restrictions as the Secretary deems desirable.

## **Grand Canyon National Park Wilderness Recommendation**

1977: Final Wilderness Recommendation signed by the Director was sent to the Legislative Counsel, where it was held in abeyance pending the completion of the Colorado River Management Plan.

1980: Upon completion of the river plan, the Director of the National Park Service to the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, transmitted a memorandum that updated the 1977 Final Wilderness Recommendation that excluded the Cross-Canyon corridor, and recommended the Colorado River as potential wilderness.

1993: NPS conducted an internal review and update of the 1980 Final Wilderness Recommendation. In August, 1993, the superintendent transmitted the 1993 Final Wilderness Recommendation to the Director of the National Park Service.

## **National Park Service Management Policies, 1988**

Update by Director's Order #41, September 1999 (see below).

## **Director's Order #41: Wilderness Preservation and Management**

Purpose: to provide accountability, consistency, and continuity to the National Park Service's wilderness management program, and guide Servicewide efforts in meeting the letter and spirit of the 1964 Wilderness Act. (p.1).

For the purposes of applying NPS wilderness policies the term "wilderness" includes the categories of suitable, study, proposed (including proposed 'potential'), recommended and designated wilderness. NPS wilderness policies apply regardless of category.

Potential wilderness may be a subset of any of these five categories...(p.6 and NPS Management Policies)

### ***Application of the Minimum Requirement Concept:***

The National Park Service will apply the minimum requirement concept to all administrative activities that affect the wilderness resource and character. The application of the minimum requirement concept is intended to minimize impacts on wilderness character and resources and must guide all management actions in wilderness.(p.7)

Wilderness managers may authorize (using a documented process) the generally prohibited activities or uses listed in Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act **if they are deemed necessary** (emphasis added) to meet the minimum requirements for the administration of the area as wilderness and where those methods are determined to be the "minimum tool" for the project. The use of motorized equipment and the establishment of management facilities are specifically prohibited **when other reasonable alternatives are available** (emphasis added).

### **Minimum Requirement Concept**

The minimum requirement concept is a two-step process that documents 1) the determination as to whether or not a proposed management action is appropriate or necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness, and does not pose a significant impact to the wilderness resources and character; and, 2) the selection of the management method (tool) that causes the least amount of impact to the physical resources and experiential qualities (character) of wilderness.

### **Minimum Method (Tool)**

A use or activity, determined to be appropriate or necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness, which makes use of the least intrusive tool, equipment, device, force, regulation or practice that will achieve the wilderness management objective.

Methods or Tools that are *generally* prohibited: chainsaws, aircraft use, radio repeater sites, structures, motorized vehicles, mechanized vehicles.

### **Grand Canyon National Park Minimum Requirement Decision Process**

Directed by NPS *Management Policies*, and Special Directive 95-2, *Management and Planning Policy for Suitable, Proposed, Recommended and Potential Wilderness Areas*.

Documented process was established by the *Draft Wilderness Management Plan* (1998).

Process update in progress to include additional requirements of DO #41. (Draft Standard Operating Procedures – December 1999).